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June 17, 2025

Urban County Planning Commission Division of Planning – Planning Services Section 101 E Vine Street, Floor 7 Lexington, KY 40507

Re: First Supplemental Justification Letter

PLN-MAR-25-00008: 1811 Winchester Road, Lexington, Kentucky

Dear Members of the Planning Commission:

We submit this first supplemental justification letter on behalf of RD Property Group, LLC ("Applicant") for the above referenced matter to provide you additional information related to the applications and respond to the planning staff's request for more detail on certain elements of the justification letter.

Applicant will submit a revised preliminary development plan that shows (1) a sidewalk along Winchester Road, along with a sidewalk on the eastern boundary of Lot 6 for an alternative route from Winchester Road to the development, (2) an east/west sidewalk on Lot 9 to provide an additional and shorter route to and from the grocery store and apartments—with additional ground-level entries—for the residents, and (3) even though Applicant has not identified end-users for Lots 2 through 6, conceptual buildings and layouts for various restaurants, retailers, and/or professional services on those lots (each of those lots would require a final development plan prior to any development on those lots).

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In addition to the information and rationale previously supplied in the justification letter, we urge you to consider the following in support of the zone change request:

Theme A, Goal 1, Objective b.: Accommodate the demand for housing in Lexington responsibly, prioritizing high-density and mixture of housing types.

Recently, the property had one farm dwelling on it, and any new dwelling units will increase the density at this site. The proposal set forth in the expired development plan (from 2004) did not attract the development that it had intended. Over the last two decades, none of those proposed 225 apartment units were constructed. Applicant anticipates that there are additional opportunities for more density within the larger Patchen Wilkes development and the vicinity. The vacant land immediately to the west of the property across Charleston Drive was zoned to the R-3



Zone in 2006, and there is an opportunity to convert those proposed units from townhouses to apartments in the future. Likewise, in the future, there is the ability of more dwelling units to be built in the project. Further, a developer has already requested to increase the density of the single-family lots near Joan Road (from 69 houses to 115 houses). The Urban Growth Master Plan recommends that the area include 5,000 - 9,000 dwelling units. While on paper there are fewer dwellings between the two development plans, there are plenty of opportunities to increase density within the larger Patchen Wilkes development and the surrounding area.

Theme A, Goal 2, Objective b.: Respect the context and design features of areas surrounding development projects and develop design standards and guidelines to ensure compatibility with existing urban form.

Applicant did not address this item in its justification letter, but at the request of planning staff, it has evaluated this item. Planning staff states that it would prefer that Applicant re-orient the Kroger building to adjoin the rear areas of the existing commercial properties on Executive Drive and face Charleston Drive. Applicant evaluated several layouts for this site prior to filing its applications, and Applicant determined that its proposal was the most practical layout for its intended user—Kroger. Kroger's prototype-store design utilizes decades of refined space planning and lessons learned from developing and operating hundreds of stores. The size and layout of the store includes the positioning of the various service departments to promote efficient shopping, productive operations, energy conservation, and safe / secure human interaction. Kroger located its more intense vehicle uses (pharmacy, grocery pickup, and delivery trucks) to separate them from the main parking lot, which will be busy with pedestrians and other customer traffic, and to provide those vehicles with a convenient route closer to Charleston Drive and away from the main parking lot. Kroger chose this property to permit its store to orient toward a major corridor— Winchester Road. Retail visibility from the road increases how easily customers can see and notice Kroger from Winchester Road. This visibility is crucial for attracting passing traffic and potential customers and can significantly impact Koger's success. Re-orientating the store and locating it closer to Executive Drive will also substantially increase the distance pedestrians must walk from Charleston Drive to the building and rear and side parking lots can increase the opportunities for criminal activity. Kroger prefers to locate its parking in front of its building to increase surveillance and activity. There is a significant grade change between Lot 8 (Kroger) and Lot 9 (apartments), with Lot 8 being located on a hill. Applicant has to construct a retaining wall along that boundary due to the grade change, and a re-orientation would have a sidewalk running between a tall retaining wall and the parking lot and/or drive aisle. Practically, there is not enough space to reorient the building and adequately provide for out lots and an access easement along Charleston Drive. Various neighbors have expressed concern that re-orienting the building to Charleston Drive will direct light and noise pollution toward their existing residences rather than toward the corridor. Re-orienting the store will negatively affect Kroger's operations and success, and it would not create a more pedestrian-friendly outcome.



Theme A, Goal 3, Objective b.: Strive for positive and safe social interactions in neighborhoods, including, but not limited to, neighborhoods that are connected for pedestrians and various modes of transportation.

There is a significant grade change between Lot 8 (Kroger) and Lot 9 (apartments), with Lot 8 being located on a hill, and a direct ADA-compliant path between the lots is not practical. Applicant is proposing an east/west sidewalk on Lot 9 to provide an additional and shorter route to and from the grocery store and apartments, with additional ground-level entries to that sidewalk, for the residents.

Applicant is not required to install sidewalks along an arterial, but at the request of neighbors, Traffic Engineering, and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Planner, Applicant is proposing the installation of a sidewalk along Winchester Road and a sidewalk along the eastern boundary of Lot 6. This will provide an alternative and safer route (out of right-of-way and off of shoulder) from Winchester Road to the development.

POLICIES

Theme A, Pillar I, Design Policy #2: Patchen Wilkes Development will have connections to the existing road networks in the surrounding areas. Applicant is constructing two new public roads to connect to Winchester Road and Executive Drive. This will enhance service times and access in the surrounding area. Applicant will construct a new right-turn lane and relocate the shoulder for such portion of Winchester Road, onto Charleston Drive.

Theme A, Pillar I, Design Policy #4: The existing context of the surrounding area is suburban. Most of the existing structures were developed with low-density lotting patterns with one and two-stories. Applicant has proposed a medium density development on this site that is sensitive to that surrounding context.

Theme A, Pillar I, Design Policy #8: At this time, Applicant is showing one and two-bedroom units in eh apartment buildings, and this will bring additional housing choices to an area that is mostly single-family homes at this time.

Theme A, Pillar I, Design Policy #13: Applicant is building a new section of public road to connect to the stub at Thunderstick Drive and Executive Drive.

Theme B, Pillar II, Sustainability Policy #4: Each lot will manage its own stormwater quantity and quality, and it is anticipated that underground retention with pervious pavement will be utilized in the vehicle use areas to manage stormwater. In addition to stormwater management, pervious pavement permits water and evaporation pores to lower the temperature of parking lots. The vehicle use areas will have perimeter buffering, interior landscaping, and tree canopy of 30%. These design features will reduce and mitigate the negative effects of the vehicle use areas.



Theme C. Pillar II, Diversity Policy #2: Kroger offers its Lexington employees (i) affordable, comprehensive medical, dental, vision and prescription coverage, and union-scale wages through collective bargaining agreements, and (ii) industry-leading training programs and a college-tuition-assistance program, which provide opportunities for a living-wage and upward mobility.

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA / PLACEBUILDER

Applicant has submitted this proposal as the Corridor Place-type, but planning staff opines that the Regional Center Place-type would more accurately portray the intended use. The Corridor Place-Type and the Regional Center Place-type have similar development criteria, with the Regional Center Place-type having only a few additional development criteria that were not addressed in the justification letter. Below includes a discussion of both the additional development criteria and those development criteria for which planning staff requested additional detail:

LAND USE

A-DN3-1 This commercial center will include an expansive supermarket that will attract customers from both the area and the wider community. A recent report by Drive Research states that approximately 75% of customers choose in-store shopping and 25% choose online shopping (split about evenly between delivery services and grocery pickup services), with online shopping seeing a significant increase from 2022 to 2024. On the other hand, most people will typically only walk 1/4 mile before opting for another form of transportations (the planning concept being aptly named "quarter-mile walkability")—meaning Kroger's pool of pedestrian customers will be small even after Patchen Wilkes is fully-built out. Kroger anticipates that it will have more grocery pickup customers using vehicles than pedestrian customers. Applicant has attempted to balance these differing users with its design, while still being able to have a successful operation that meets the expectations of its customers. Applicant has separated its more vehicle intensive uses (fuel station and grocery pickup and pharmacy areas) from its main parking lot and located them closer to Charleston Drive to reduce the likelihood of those vehicle users transversing the main parking lot and increasing pedestrian contacts with in-store shoppers. Applicant will provide sidewalks and cross-walks to meets the needs of pedestrians. The grocery building, fuel station, and grocery pickup and pharmacy areas will not dominate the streetscape along Charleston Drive. There are substantial vegetative areas that separate the 6' sidewalks along Charleston Drive, and those areas will include landscape buffering and trees to reach the required tree canopy for the development. This commercial center is within a short walking distance of residential neighborhoods, and it will provide multi-modal infrastructure for new and future connections to those areas. Applicant is not required to install sidewalks along an arterial, but at the request of neighbors, Traffic Engineering, and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Planner, Applicant is proposing the installation of a sidewalk along Winchester Road and a sidewalk along the eastern boundary of Lot 6. This will provide an alternative route from Winchester Road to the development. Installing those sidewalks would necessitate additional grading along Winchester Road and Lots 2 through 6 and the removal of the trees within that area. There is a significant grade change between Lot 8 (Kroger) and Lot 9 (apartments), with Lot 8 being located on a hill. Applicant has



reviewed this area and determined that it could not practically construct a direct ADA-compliant path between the lots. Applicant will provide an east/west sidewalk on Lot 9 to provide an additional and shorter route to and from the grocery store and apartments for the residents.

TRANSPORTATION, CONNECTIVITY, AND WALKABILITY

A-DS5-2 Charleston Drive is a curvilinear road and will slow traffic. The roadway is not overly wide—Applicant is constructing it to the width required by the city's regulations. Charleston Drive has a 10' utility strip and 6' sidewalk, and street trees along the west side, which will separate pedestrians from vehicles. There are substantial vegetative areas that abut the 6' sidewalk, which will include landscaping and trees that will be used to create a vertical edge. The grocery building, fuel station, and grocery pickup and pharmacy areas will not dominate the streetscape along Charleston Drive. Applicant is proposing designated and visible cross-walks and ramps at appropriate locations to clarify uses.

C-PS10-1 Applicant is proposing the amount of parking that Kroger needs for its operations. While not all end-users are known, Applicant anticipates that all of the users within this project will have similar peak parking hours during the evenings and weekends. Applicant wants to limit parking to its users' customers and employees to manage access, safety, and liability. Applicant is proposing less parking spaces for the out lots, apartments and Kroger site than what was proposed in the expired development plan (from 2004). That expired development plan shows 1,148 parking spaces.

D-CO4-2 The new public roads are pieces to the future roadway infrastructure of this area. This roadway infrastructure is not a radial street network.

D-CO4-3 The new public roads will connect to the existing roads at Winchester Road and Thunderstick Drive. The new public roads will be graded to align with those existing roads.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

- B-PR2-1 There is a small area of Zone AE on the property near the location of Thunderstick Drive. Thunderstick Drive will separate this small area from the larger greenway, and Applicant intends to relocate the entirety of the floodplain on the northside of Thunderstick Drive and seek a conditional letter of map revision (CLOMR). Applicant will work with the Division of Engineering and Division of Water Quality on that proposal.
- B-PR2-2 There is a small area of Zone AE on the property near the location of Thunderstick Drive. Thunderstick Drive will separate this small area from the larger greenway, and Applicant intends to relocate the entirety of the floodplain on the northside of Thunderstick Drive and seek a conditional letter of map revision (CLOMR). Applicant will work with the Division of Engineering and Division of Water Quality on that proposal. Sidewalks will be installed along the new public roads to permit future connections to greenways located on adjacent properties.
- B-PR3-1 Not Applicable. No conservation properties adjoin the property, and all greenways will be located on the other side of public roads.
- B-RE5-2 There is a small area of Zone AE on the property near the location of Thunderstick Drive. Thunderstick Drive will separate this small area from the larger greenway, and Applicant intends to relocate the entirety of the floodplain on the northside of Thunderstick



Drive and seek a conditional letter of map revision (CLOMR). Applicant will work with the Division of Engineering and Division of Water Quality on that proposal.

B-PR7-1 There are no trees existing within the interior of the site. Applicant had intended to retain all perimeter trees other than damaged and dying trees and trees located within the proposed rights of way. Applicant is not required to install sidewalks along an arterial, but at the request of neighbors, Traffic Engineering, and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Planner, Applicant is proposing the installation of a sidewalk along Winchester Road and a sidewalk along the eastern boundary of Lot 6. This will provide an alternative route from Winchester Road to the development. Installing those sidewalks would necessitate additional grading along Winchester Road and Lots 2 through 6 and removal of the trees within that area. Those trees consist of pines and locusts.

B-RE1-1 Currently, the property has a tree canopy of 2.7%, and the proposed project will have a tree canopy of 20%. This includes a 30% tree canopy within the interior vehicle use area.

SITE DESIGN

Building orientation and site layout is not the only means of satisfying this A-DS5-4 development criteria. The development will provide various multi-modal facilities, with 6' sidewalks and bike lanes on Charleston Drive. Charleston Drive has a 10' utility strip and 6' sidewalk, and street trees along the west side, which will separate pedestrians from vehicles. There are substantial vegetative areas that abut the 6' sidewalk, which will include landscaping and trees to further activate the streetscape and buffer the grocery building, fuel station, and grocery pickup and pharmacy areas along Charleston Drive. This design will separate these more intense vehicle uses (pharmacy, grocery pickup, and delivery trucks) from the main parking lot, which will be busy with pedestrians and other customer traffic, reducing conflicts between vehicular traffic and pedestrians. Applicant will provide sidewalks and cross-walks to meets the needs of pedestrians. The spacing between Charleston Drive between Winchester Road and the roundabout at Thunderstick Dive is approximately 1,600' (or 1/3 mile), and there are only two access points to the commercial lots along that stretch of road. Applicant is proposing designated and visible crosswalks at appropriate locations to clarify uses. The Kroger Marketplace will have a large common open space with a shelter that includes benches and a bike repair station. Based upon the neighborhood meeting. Kroger will install an equine-themed shelter (enclosed herein is a copy of Kroger's updated conceptual plan for the shelter). The apartment buildings are being proposed close to those roads, and the apartment community is proposed to have a large-park-like entry. As discussed above in the section for Theme A, Goal 2, Objective b., Applicant evaluated several layouts for this site prior to filing its applications, and Applicant determined that its proposal was the most practical layout for its intended user—Kroger. Rear and side parking lots can increase the opportunities for criminal activity. Kroger prefers to locate its parking in front of its building to increase surveillance and activity. Re-orientating the store and locating it closer to Executive Drive will also substantially increase the distance pedestrians must walk from Charleston Drive to the building.

A-DS7-1 Applicant is proposing the amount of parking that Kroger needs for its operations. It is the only user of the parking lot, and it is impractical to create a number of smaller



parking lots for one user. As discussed above in the section for Theme A, Goal 2, Objective b., Applicant evaluated several layouts for this site prior to filing its applications, and Applicant determined that its proposal was the most practical layout for its intended user—Kroger. Rear and side parking lots can increase the opportunities for criminal activity. Kroger prefers to locate its parking in front of its building to increase surveillance and activity. The parking lot is buffered from the public roadways with other structures and/or substantial vegetative areas that abut the 6' sidewalk, which will include landscaping and trees. Charleston Drive has a 10' utility strip and 6' sidewalk, and street trees along the west side, which will separate pedestrians from vehicles. The mass of the parking surface will the broken up with a substantial number of vegetated areas and trees. As discussed in the section for Theme B, Pillar II, Sustainability Policy #4, Applicant is proposing design features to reduce and mitigate the negative effects of the vehicle use areas.

BUILDING FORM

A-DS3-1 The Multi-Family Design Standards.

SITE PLANNING

SP.2 Applicant is proposing additional ground-level entries to the apartments, but Applicant has not started designing or engineering the apartment buildings. Applicant will continue to work with planning staff, and these items will be resolved at the final development plan process for the apartments.

SP.5 In addition to the new roads and sidewalks, Applicant will add an additional east/west sidewalk along the boundary with Kroger to increase the pedestrian network at the apartments for the residents.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

AD.1 to AD.9 Applicant has not decided who will develop the apartments, and so, there are no typical design standards to share at this time. Applicant has not started the design or engineering for the apartment buildings. The project complies with all applicable zoning regulations related to mass and form.

A-DS5-3 As discussed above in the section for Theme A, Goal 2, Objective b., Applicant evaluated several layouts for this site prior to filing its applications, and Applicant determined that its proposal was the most practical layout for its intended user—Kroger. To increase activation of the streetscape, Charleston Drive will have a 10' utility strip and 6' sidewalk, substantial vegetative areas that abut the 6' sidewalk, which will include landscaping and trees. These items will further activate the streetscape and buffer the grocery building, fuel station, and grocery pickup and pharmacy areas along Charleston Drive. The Kroger Marketplace will have a large common open space with a shelter that includes benches and a bike repair station. Based upon the neighborhood meeting, Kroger will install an equine-themed shelter (enclosed herein is a copy of Kroger's updated conceptual plan for the shelter). The grocery building, fuel station, and grocery pickup and pharmacy areas will not dominate the streetscape along Charleston Drive.

The rezoning request is in accord with many of the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.



VARIANCE REQUEST

In addition to the information and rationale previously supplied in the justification letter, we urge you to consider the following in support of the requested variance:

First, there is a significant grade change between Lot 8 (Kroger) and Lot 9 (apartments), with Lot 8 being located on a hill. Applicant has to construct a retaining wall along that boundary of the lots due to the grade change. A portion of that retaining wall will run along Charleston Drive and partially buffer this vehicle use area. This grade change (and necessary retaining wall) makes the locating structures between this vehicle use area and Charleston Drive difficult, which is one reason that the proposed shelter is located closer to the fuel station. This grade change also limits the ability of Applicant to construct a third access point on Charleston Drive to the rear of the building.

Second, as discussed above in the section for Theme A, Goal 2, Objective b., Applicant evaluated several layouts for this site prior to filing its applications, and Applicant determined that its proposal was the most practical layout for its intended user—Kroger. Practically, there is not enough space to re-orient the building and adequately provide for out lots and an access easement along Charleston Drive. Therefore, rather than requesting a 110' of vehicle use area, Applicant may need hundreds of feet of vehicle use area between the building and Charleston Drive if it re-oriented the building to adjoin the commercial properties along Executive Drive. Rear and side parking lots can increase the opportunities for criminal activity. Kroger prefers to locate its parking in front of its building to increase surveillance and activity. Various neighbors have expressed concern that re-orienting the building to Charleston Drive will increase light and noise pollution toward their existing residences rather than toward the corridor.

Third, one of the purposes of the 60' vehicular use area requirement is to mitigate the conflicts between pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The customer parking for the 122,000 SF Kroger Marketplace will be a very-busy pedestrian and vehicular traffic area with customers, children, and loaded grocery carts moving through that area as customers park their cars, walk into the store, return to their cars, and leave the shopping center. The pharmacy pickup window and the grocery pickup area, as well as the entrance for the large delivery trucks, are located on the west end of the building. This vehicular use area is planned and designed to isolate those activities and vehicular traffic from the main parking lot, resulting in the necessity of the requested variance. Likewise, relocating the wine and spirits grocery pickup window to this area would necessitate these more intensive vehicle uses to move through the main parking lot. Further, the design will discourage pedestrians from entering this vehicular use area and encourage the vehicular traffic entering and exiting that area avoid the main parking lot. The actual pedestrian path coming from Charleston Drive crosses the 30' driveway area and then crosses a raised area before it crosses the 12' drive aisle in front of the pharmacy pickup window. Thus, the actual pedestrian conflict crossings in this area are only 42'. Further, the actual lane widths within that vehicular use area are under 60'.

Lastly, Applicant is agreeable to provide enhanced landscaping along this vehicle use area to buffer the additional paved area and discourage pedestrians from entering that paved area. Applicant will already be providing a retaining wall which will partially buffer this paved area from Charleston Drive.

With these additional points of consideration, we respectfully request approval for the vehicle use area variance.

REMOVAL OF ZONING RESTRICTIONS

In addition to the information and rationale previously supplied in the justification letter, we urge you to consider the following in support of the requested removal of zoning restrictions:

In 2004, Urban County Council found the following to support adoption of the zoning restrictions: "These land use restrictions are appropriate and necessary at this location to ensure that the proposed development is appropriate for the nearby neighborhood and implements the residential land use recommendation of the Comprehensive Plan for the subject property."

First, the 2001 Comprehensive Plan's future land use map was partially used to justify the zoning restrictions to implement the recommended "residential land use" for the subject property. The 2001 Comprehensive Plan is no longer governing, and the 2013 Comprehensive Plan abandoned the future land use map for the subject property (and other properties). The 2024 Comprehensive Plan does not recommend that the subject property be a residential land use. Therefore, the partial justification for the zoning restrictions no longer exists. This is a major change of an economic, physical, or social nature on the subject property, and the zoning restrictions based on a residential land use recommendation that no longer exists is not appropriate.

Second, this area has changed over the last two decades, and further changes are proposed over the next decades. There will be more residents, employees, students, and visitors within a mile of this project than what was anticipated in 2004. In 2006, approximately 34 acres adjoining the subject property (east side of Charleston Drive within Patchen Wilkes) were up-zoned to the R-3 Zone from lower density zones (R-1D and R-1T Zones). The 2024 Urban Growth Master Plan expanded the Urban Service Area to include 1,017 acres within a mile of the subject property. The Urban Growth Master Plan recommends that the area include 5,000 - 9,000 dwelling units. This changes will increase density in the area that was not contemplated in 2004. In 2004, it was not contemplated that three of the city's largest employers would come to this area with new campuses. Frederick Douglas High School was developed on a 65-acre campus on the other side of Winchester Road. Baptist Health Hamburg is developing a 129-acre medical campus that currently employs 300 at its 344,000 SF outpatient medical center, and it is expected that employment will expand to 700 employees upon full build-out. University of Kentucky Medical Center purchased 41 acres at the corner of Polo Club Boulevard and Winchester Road, and the medical center is currently planning to develop specialty clinics at the campus—similar to Turfland Mall. None of those three campuses were contemplated in 2004, and they will attract new employees, students, and visitors to this area on a daily basis. These are major changes of an economic, physical, or social nature within the area, which have changed the character of the area.



Third, in 2004, at the time of the restrictive zoning, the adjoining properties to the west of the subject property were zoned R-1D Zone and R-1T Zone, and the restrictive zoning was found to be "appropriate and necessary at this location to ensure that the proposed development is appropriate for the nearby neighborhood." As mentioned above, in 2006, that land was up-zoned to the R-3 Zone, which changed the character of the proposed-adjoining neighborhood from detached and attached single family homes to potentially multi-family dwellings. The new zoning permits higher buildings to buffer between the commercial area and the lower-density neighborhood(s) to the west. The 80 acres on the other side of Winchester Road now contains Frederick Douglas High School and an apartment complex. No single family zoning is adjacent to the subject property. These are major changes of an economic, physical, or social nature within the area, which have changed the character of the area.

Lastly, the B-1 Zone is the least intensive business zone. The zoning ordinance has had significant modification since 2004, which mitigates many of the potential concerns related to the zoning restrictions: Landscaping and Tree Protection Standards ZOTA; the Urban Growth Management ZOTA (prohibits new fuel stations and requires a conditional use permit for any new drive-through); and updated sign regulations. These items are discussed in more detail in the justification letter.

As stated in the justification letter, as amended herein, based on major changes of an economic, physical or social nature on the subject property and/or within the area in which the subject property is located, which were not anticipated at the time the binding restrictions were imposed, and which have substantially altered the basic character of such area, the restrictions are no longer appropriate or proper.

I appreciate your consideration of these matters.

Sincerely,

P. Branden Gross

PySPR









